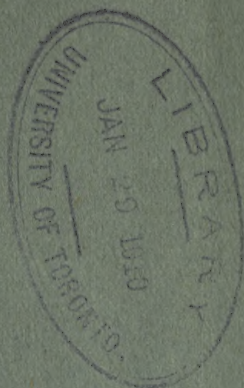


# THE INDIANS IN THE CIVIL WAR



BY

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## THE INDIANS IN THE CIVIL WAR

No state in the Union was more prompt and vigorous in taking issue on the question of secession than were the larger and more civilized of those Indian tribes that had been removed, under Federal direction, from the east to the west of the Mississippi.

At the opening of the Civil War, these emigrants, victims of economic advancement and of the states'-rights doctrine, occupied extensive reservations immediately beyond Missouri and Arkansas and formed, collectively, a very considerable portion of the population of two superintendencies, the Central and the Southern. Within the Central Superintendency were practically all those that had come from the Free States, such tribes, for instance, to name them in the general order of their location, as the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri, who were in Nebraska, and in Kansas the Kickapoos, the Wyandots, the Munsees, or Christians, the Delawares, the Shawnees, the Sacs and Foxes of Mississippi, and a variety of small tribes that had come from the region of the old Northwest Territory.<sup>1</sup>

The southern line of the Central Superintendency ran north of the New York Indian Reservation. South of it was the Southern Superintendency, which consequently embraced southern Kansas as well as the whole of the old Indian Territory, or the present state of Oklahoma. The Indian emigrants within it were the New York Indian families, insignificant in number, the five great slaveholding tribes that had come from south of the Mason and Dixon line: *viz.*, the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Chickasaws, and the Seminoles; also some remnants, as they were called, of Wichitas, Quapaws, Caddoes, Shawnees, and Senecas, together with certain Indian exiles from Texas. These last occupied the "Leased District", on the False Washita River, of the Choctaw and Chickasaw country.

On the very day, January 5, 1861, when the famous caucus of Southern senators adopted resolutions advising immediate seces-

<sup>1</sup> The confederated Weas, Peorias, Kaskaskias, and Piankeshaws, the Potawatomes, the Ottawas, the Miamies, and Chippewas. Within the Central and Southern superintendencies were a number of indigenous tribes also, the more prominent, as far as the scope of this paper is concerned, being the Kaws of north-central Kansas, the Osages of southern Kansas, and some of the Indians of the Plains.



sion,<sup>2</sup> the Chickasaw legislature showed itself fully cognizant of the fact that a crisis had arrived in American national affairs by suggesting an intertribal conference to secure co-operative activity of some sort on the part of the Five Civilized Tribes should a political separation occur between the North and the South.<sup>3</sup> Cyrus Harris, the governor of the Chickasaw Nation, duly communicated this plan to the authorities of the other tribes but it drew forth a very unfavorable comment from John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokees, who felt that the quarrel between the states was no concern of the Indians. Other leading Indians seem to have been of a contrary opinion and the Creek chiefs, being invited to decide upon a date for the conference, named the seventeenth of February.

Meanwhile, the Choctaw Nation, in General Council assembled, took an even more pronounced action and committed itself unequivocally to the pro-slavery cause. This was done on February 7 by a series of resolutions of such a tenor that no one can doubt that motives of self-preservation inspired their passage.<sup>4</sup> Texas and Arkansas were so close to the Choctaw country that the Choctaws could not venture to ally themselves with the North or even to remain neutral. Moreover, as slaveholders, they firmly believed that their "natural affections, education, institutions, and interests" bound them "indissolubly . . . in every way to the destiny" of their "neighbors and brethren of the Southern States".

The work accomplished by the convention of February 17 can best be described by quoting the report of the Cherokee delegates to it, men who had been appointed by John Ross that they might use their influence on the side of discretion and moderation.

The undersigned respectfully report to you that they attended the proposed Conference between the Creeks, Choctaws, Chicasaws, Seminoles, and Cherokees at the Creek Agency. Neither the Choctaws nor the Chickasaws were represented. The Creeks and Seminoles were. We were very kindly received by them and had a free and friendly interchange of opinions with them in regard to our present condition and duty in view of the pending difficulties in the United States. Our opinions were harmonious and the conclusion that we arrived at in view of our Treaty obligations, was simply to do nothing, to keep quiet and to comply with our Treaties. Mutual expressions of good feeling were given and whatever may be the exigencies of the future, if any should arise, we will be found acting in concert and having a common destiny. The course pursued was submitted to the Creek Council and was fully approved.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Nicolay and Hay's *Lincoln*, III. 180, note.

<sup>3</sup> Indian Office General Files, "Cherokee, 1859-1865", C. 515.

<sup>4</sup> *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, series I., I. 682.

<sup>5</sup> William P. Ross, Thomas Pegg, Lewis Downing, and John Spears to John Ross, dated Fort Gibson, March 15, 1861. General Files, "Cherokee, 1859-1865", C. 515.



While these events were in progress, the conduct of the Arkansas authorities, as viewed from the standpoint of loyalty to the Union, was most reprehensible. Months before the state passed its ordinance of secession, the governor, Henry M. Rector, and the man in charge of the Indian affairs of the Southern Superintendency, Elias Rector, both brought strong influences to bear upon John Ross to induce him to abandon his proposed policy of friendly inactivity; but all to no purpose.<sup>6</sup> John Ross was too shrewd a man to jeopardize the welfare of himself and his tribe by venturing prematurely upon a scheme so hazardous.

The very position of the Indian Territory, however, made a long continued neutrality absolutely impossible. At the outset of the war the country was in an almost defenseless condition. As early as March, 1858, Secretary Floyd had planned a general withdrawal of troops from the Indian frontier.<sup>7</sup> Although Thompson, the Secretary of the Interior, vigorously deprecated such action, it was in great measure persisted in. In May, 1860, several forts were completely abandoned and others weakened. Moreover, when hostilities finally broke out, the Union troops surrendered their position at the first approach of the Texans, leaving the bewildered tribes entirely at the mercy of the pro-Southern agents and Confederate emissaries.

Southern sympathizers among officials and ex-officials in the Indian Territory were very numerous. Foremost stood Douglas H. Cooper, the Choctaw and Chickasaw agent, an appointee of Buchanan. His untrustworthiness was notorious yet was well matched by that of men placed in office during the early days of Lincoln's administration. Some of these refused to give the Indians any assurance of the continued interest of the United States government in their concerns. Others, like John Crawford, Cherokee agent, William Quesenbury, Creek agent, Samuel M. Rutherford, Seminole agent, and Matthew Leeper, Wichita agent, trusted that the inaccessible character of the Indian country would prevent a report of their doings from reaching Washington and worked openly for secession. Most of them were citizens of Arkansas.

The South seems from the first to have appreciated the importance of the Indian Territory as a possible storehouse for provisions, as a highway to and from Texas, and in some slight degree, no doubt, as a base for securing Colorado Territory and the new

<sup>6</sup> General Files, "Cherokee, 1859-1865", C. 515; *Official Records*, series I., XIII. 490-492, and I. 683; Moore, *Rebellion Record*, II., doc. 114.

<sup>7</sup> Indian Office General Files, "Miscellaneous, 1858-1863".



state of Kansas. Rumor represented Colorado as thoroughly indignant at the short-sightedness of the federal government in withdrawing its troops from the frontier and thus leaving her exposed to the merciless ferocity of the wild Indians of the Plains; and Kansas as controlled by poor, worthless, starving Abolitionists who were still dependent upon charitable donations from the Eastern states and who might be easily overcome by the pro-slavery element could an effective Confederate force be brought from the southward.

In consideration of some of these things, the Confederate government, May 13, 1861, appointed the brave Texan ranger, Benjamin McCulloch, brigadier-general of its Provisional Army, and assigned him to the command of the Indian Territory. Three regiments of white troops were ordered to report to him and, if they could be raised, two Indian regiments. McCulloch took charge of his command with the expectation of making its headquarters at some point in the Cherokee country,<sup>8</sup> which lay immediately south of Kansas, but John Ross objected and, on May 17, issued a proclamation of strict neutrality.<sup>9</sup> McCulloch, thereupon, retired to Fort Smith in western Arkansas and proceeded to muster his forces. On the same day that he had received his appointment, the Confederate Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker, had instructed Douglas H. Cooper "to raise among the Choctaws and Chickasaws a mounted regiment to be commanded by" himself "in co-operation with General McCulloch"; and had signified that it was designed to raise two other similar regiments among the Creeks, Cherokees, Seminoles, and other friendly tribes. The duty of raising these additional regiments was entrusted to David Hubbard, the Confederate Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

At a considerable time before this, the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States had laid down the lines of a definite Indian policy. It had created a Bureau of Indian Affairs and had attached it to the War Department. It had, moreover, taken some steps towards opening up negotiations with the great tribes, but it was not until May 21 that it formally enacted a law providing for the assumption of a protectorate over them.

At this point a most interesting figure appeared upon the scene in the person of Albert Pike, a New Englander, who had emigrated to Arkansas and had settled at Little Rock. To-day, he is chiefly remembered for his prominence as a Mason and it was the Masonic Order that erected the statue to his memory in Washington; but, in his own day, he was known as a great friend of the Indians, his

<sup>8</sup> Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>9</sup> *Official Records*, series I., XIII. 489-490.



poetic sensibilities having been deeply stirred by a consciousness of the great injustice that had been done them ever since the first coming of the white man. As soon as war broke out between the states, he avowed himself an extreme secessionist and promptly volunteered his services to the Confederacy in effecting an Indian alliance. Admittedly he was the man best fitted, by reason of his known interest in the cause of Indian rights, to draw the great tribes of the Indian Territory away from their allegiance to the federal government. This the Confederacy recognized and forthwith regularly commissioned him to negotiate treaties of friendship and alliance,<sup>10</sup> without giving him, however, any definite instructions as to what the terms of the treaties should comprehend. Apparently the object was to gain the support of the Indians at all costs.

When Pike set out upon his mission in the latter part of May, 1861, he had great hopes of securing the Cherokees by taking advantage of a certain dissatisfaction that was slowly developing against the neutral policy of the Principal Chief. In this he failed. He then passed on to other tribes and met with considerable, and yet with no flattering, success. The Choctaws and the Chickasaws were the only Indians that, at this early time, went over to the South as nations and they, it will be remembered, had been the nations most ready for action in the beginning. Some of the tribes split into two factions, as for instance, the Comanches, the Seminoles, and the Creeks. Usually, when this was the case, the half-breeds constituted the disloyal faction and the full-blooded Indians the loyal. Sometimes only a single band, or perhaps two bands, in a tribe supported secession. Such, for example, was the case with the Tonkawas of the Wichita tribe and the Black Dogs of the Osage.

Of the more insignificant tribes of the Indian Territory, the remnants in the northeast, weak, unorganized, and influenced by their agent, Andrew J. Dorn, yielded to Pike without much persuasion. In individual cases they were most probably taken by surprise and intimidated. Among these detached bands, the Quapaws were the only ones that remained unqualifiedly loyal. The Caddoes from the interior country were loyal also, as, indeed, were most of the tribes north of the thirty-seventh parallel. Kansas seems to have been beyond the scope of Pike's operations; and its Indian inhabitants, when not indigenous, being emigrants from the Free States,

<sup>10</sup> President Davis had been authorized by resolution of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States, March 14, 1861, to send a special agent to the Indian tribes west of Arkansas. See *Journal of the Confederate Congress*, I. 105.



were generally not familiar with or attached to the institution of slavery. They were in the Central Superintendency, of which it was reported that "with scarcely a single exception" the tribes "remained firm and true to the government", several of them furnishing a liberal quota of troops to its military forces. More than one-half of the adult male Delawares regularly enlisted as volunteers, and they were highly esteemed as soldiers by their officers.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile the Chickasaw legislature, with the sanction of the governor, Cyrus Harris, took definite action May 25, 1861, and declared outright for the Confederacy, at the same time urging all the neighboring nations to form a defensive and offensive alliance against "the Lincoln hordes and Kansas robbers". Their reasons were expressed in the following preamble to a series of resolutions:

Whereas the Government of the United States has been broken up by the secession of a large number of States composing the Federal Union that the dissolution has been followed by war between the parties; and whereas the destruction of the Union as it existed by the Federal Constitution is irreparable, and consequently the Government of the United States as it was when the Chickasaw and other Indian nations formed alliances and treaties with it no longer exists; and whereas the Lincoln Government, pretending to represent said Union, has shown by its course towards us, in withdrawing from our country the protection of the Federal troops, and withholding, unjustly and unlawfully, our money placed in the hands of the Government of the United States as trustee, to be applied for our benefit, a total disregard of treaty obligations towards us; and whereas our geographical position, our social and domestic institutions, our feelings and sympathies, all attach us to our Southern friends, against whom is about to be waged a war of subjugation or extermination, of conquest and confiscation—a war which, if we can judge from the political partisans of the Lincoln Government, will surpass the French Revolution in scenes of blood and that of San Domingo in atrocious horrors; and whereas it is impossible that the Chickasaws, deprived of their money and destitute of all means of separate self-protection, can maintain neutrality or escape the storm which is about to burst upon the South, but, on the contrary, would be suspected, oppressed, and plundered alternately by armed bands from the North, South, East and West; and whereas we have an abiding confidence that all our rights—tribal and individual—secured to us under treaties with the United States, will be fully recognized, guaranteed, and protected by our friends of the Confederate States; and whereas as a Southern people we consider their cause our own: Therefore

Be it resolved, etc.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1863, House Ex. Docs., 38 Cong., 1 sess., vol. III., p. 149.*

<sup>12</sup> *Official Records, series I., III. 585-587.*



In view of this stand and of that taken somewhat earlier by the Choctaws, it was not surprising that Colonel Cooper raised his Indian regiment with little difficulty. On June 14, George Hudson, Principal Chief of the Choctaws, issued a proclamation calling for seven hundred troops who were to serve as riflemen and for an additional force who were to serve as Home Guards. These latter were to be selected from men unfit for regular duty or exempted by reason of the age limit of forty-five years. Soon after the middle of July, McCulloch was able to report to Walker that the Choctaw and Chickasaw regiment was assembling at Scullyville in the extreme northeastern corner of the Choctaw country, about fifteen miles from Fort Smith, where he intended to keep it as a check upon the Cherokees. The latter were to be further checked by Arkansas on the east and McCulloch on the northeast, that is, on the Missouri line.

Although the Federal troops had been obliged to vacate the Indian Territory at an early day, Lieutenant-Colonel William H. Emory having been ordered April 17, 1861, to withdraw them all to Fort Leavenworth,<sup>13</sup> the United States government was soon urgently called upon to regain the lost position and to rally the loyal Indians. Senator Lane was the organizer of this movement. Meanwhile, Albert Pike was insisting upon a more aggressive attitude on the part of the South; for he rightly prophesied that "the enemy's government" would not permit the Indian country to belong to the Confederate States without a severe struggle. Writing on the eleventh of May, he said:

I foresaw some time ago that the regular troops would be withdrawn, as too much needed elsewhere to be left there inactive, and that they would be replaced by volunteers, under men actuated by personal hatred of the South. I do not think that more than five or six thousand men will be sent there for a time but those, I am satisfied, will be there soon. To occupy the country with safety we ought to have at least an equal force, if we first occupy it, and shall need a much larger one if they establish themselves in it during an inaction. It will hardly be safe to count upon putting in the field more than 3,500 Indians; maybe we may get 5,000. To procure any, or at least any respectable number, we must guarantee them their lands, annuities, and other rights under treaties, furnish them arms, (rifles and revolvers, if the latter can be had), advance them some \$25. a head in cash, and send a respectable force there, as evidence that they will be efficiently seconded by us.<sup>14</sup>

The result of all this was, that Pike, after completing the work of negotiating Indian treaties, which took him the months of June

<sup>13</sup> *Official Records*, series I., I. 667.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 572-574.



and July, was made "commander of all the Indian troops in the Confederate service".<sup>15</sup>

Sympathy for the Confederate cause was meanwhile steadily growing among the Cherokees. On August 21 the nation, through its General Council, declared for secession. Agent Crawford took a prominent part in the meeting and, as was reported later by Special Agent E. H. Carruth, painted secession and the Confederate cause in the most glowing of colors. John Ross justified, upon grounds of good faith and expediency, his own previous policy of neutrality but declared that the time had now come for the Cherokees to take sides and that, as they were a slaveholding people, the more natural alliance would be with the South. Undoubtedly, the discretion exercised by General McCulloch and the respect he had shown for the Cherokee neutrality had great weight with Ross. McCulloch, it may be remarked, was not wholly in sympathy with the policy of enrolling Indians in the ranks and was firmly of the opinion that, even if enrolled, they should be kept within their own country. He feared that, were they allowed to become an invading army, they would run riot and bring the whole Confederate service into disgrace. The Indians themselves were averse to anything but home-guard duty and, in all their treaties with Pike, solemnly stipulated that under no circumstances should the Indian soldiers be taken beyond the limits of the Indian Territory.

On October 7, 1861, the Cherokee alliance was consummated by a treaty,<sup>16</sup> the last in the Confederate series and the most important. Its third article read thus:

The Confederate States of America having accepted the said protectorate, hereby solemnly promise the said Cherokee Nation never to desert or abandon it, and that under no circumstances will they permit the Northern States, or any other enemy, to overcome them and sever the Cherokees from the Confederacy; but that they will, at any cost and all hazards, protect and defend them, and maintain unbroken the ties created by identity of interests and institutions, and strengthened and made perpetual by this treaty.

In general, the Confederacy found its strongest support among the half-breeds, who were naturally the more intelligent body in an Indian community and also, to its shame be it said, the more unprincipled. Very early in the summer of 1861, secret societies were formed devoted to the opposing interests. The half-breeds, or

<sup>15</sup> Presumably this statement should be held to mean that Pike was given command of the Indian Territory forces only. The Choctaws of Mississippi and the North Carolina Cherokees were certainly not under him.

<sup>16</sup> *Confederate Statutes at Large*, pp. 394-411.



secessionists, joined the "Knights of the Golden Circle"; the full-bloods, not to be outdone in effective mustering of forces, organized the society of the "Pins",<sup>17</sup> the significance of the name being found in the circumstance that the meetings were held among the hills, where the members tried to hide their real object by connecting serious business with bowling.

The Pins were most numerous among the Creeks, of whom, perhaps, two-thirds remained loyal to the United States government. At the head of this loyal faction was an old chief, Opothleyohola by name, who, not content with making empty protestations of loyalty, prepared, by force of arms, to maintain the integrity of the Indian Territory. Cooper, with his Choctaws and Chickasaws, was sent against him. The old chief managed to hold his own for a time, but finally Cooper's force, being reinforced by some Texas cavalry, a Creek regiment under Colonel D. N. McIntosh, and a Creek and Seminole battalion, to the number of fourteen hundred men, was able to push him beyond the Kansas line.

It was then the middle of winter and the weather bitterly cold. Women and children followed in the wake of the soldiers and all went as refugees northward. Throughout the winter of 1861-1862 the main body lingered in southern Kansas and suffered unspeakably. Their numbers were estimated at some six thousand, but accounts vary. Certain it is that the support of Indian refugees in Kansas became during the early years of the war a most burdensome tax upon the federal government. The situation of these unfortunates was always serious and their very hardships and necessities afforded to agents and politicians a rare opportunity for speculation.

Early in 1862, the Confederacy resolved upon making one grand attack upon the Union stronghold in Missouri; and Major-General Earl Van Dorn took command of both the volunteer troops under Sterling Price and the regulars, including Pike's Indians, under McCulloch. The outcome was the battle of Pea Ridge, or Elk Horn Tavern, as it seems to have been more commonly called at the time, April 6-8. There is a tradition that in this battle Indians fought on both sides and after their old-time custom—war-paint, feathers, arrows, and tomahawks. The tomahawks were certainly in evidence and did some gruesome work among the dead and wounded.

<sup>17</sup> In 1862, Colonel Weer reported the existence of a secret society of Union Cherokee Indians called "Ke-too-wah" with one Solman at its head and numbering two thousand warriors. *Official Records*, series I, XIII, 431.



The Confederate failure has been largely attributed to the lack of co-operation among the commanding generals; and it would seem from the documents that General Pike with the main body of the Indians rendered only a very second-rate service. In partial repudiation of this charge, however, Pike declared that Van Dorn had treated him and his Indians with great contempt and had given them no opportunity to do their best. A Cherokee contingent under Stand Watie and another under John Drew were most efficient, and the former from that time on figured prominently and energetically in the Confederate cause. After the battle, which had resulted in the death of the brave and bold McCulloch, the Confederate troops evacuated Missouri but persistently indulged the hope of regaining it. The volunteers, for the most part, went eastward, while the regulars stationed themselves in western Arkansas and the Cherokee country.

By this time Senator J. H. Lane's plans were fully matured. He had gone to Washington and had there so ably represented the cause of Kansas and of the Indian refugees that he was given such authority to better it as was outlined in the following letter from Adjutant-General Thomas to General Hunter, January 24, 1862:

By direction of the General-in-Chief I have respectfully to inform you that Brig. Gen. J. H. Lane, U. S. Volunteers, has urged upon the President and Secretary of War an expedition to be conducted by him from Fort Leavenworth against the regions west of Missouri and Kansas [Arkansas]. The outlines of this plan were stated by him to be in accordance with your own views. The following force with supplies therefore, has been ordered to Kansas to operate under General Lane: Seven regiments cavalry, three batteries artillery, four regiments infantry, and he has been authorized also to raise about 8,000 to 10,000 Kansas troops and to organize 4,000 Indians.<sup>18</sup>

A controversy at once arose between Generals Hunter and Lane with respect to the superior position of the former. Evidently Lane had used Hunter's name as a means of securing support with the administration yet intended to act in defiance of explicit directions and form an independent command. His expedition fell into great disrepute and was often referred to in disparaging terms, such as "the Jayhawking Expedition" and "the Indian Expedition". Concerning it, Lincoln wrote on the thirty-first of January:

It is my wish that the expedition commonly called the "Lane Expedition" shall be as much as has been promised at the Adjutant-General's office under the supervision of General McClellan *and not any more*. I have not intended and do not now intend that it shall

<sup>18</sup> *Official Records*, series I., VIII. 525.



be a *great, exhausting affair*, but a snug, sober column of 10,000 or 15,000. General Lane has been told by me many times that he is under the command of General Hunter, and assented to it as often as told. It was the distinct agreement between him and me when I appointed him that he was to be under Hunter.<sup>19</sup>

The Indians themselves wanted Lane to superintend the expedition. When a rumor came that he was to be displaced, Opothleyohola personally interceded for him and assured Lincoln that the Indians could have confidence in no one else. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, accompanied Lane westward and assisted him in gathering together his Indian troops.

The ostensible object of this Lane expedition was "to open the way for the friendly Indians who were then refugees in Kansas to return to their homes and to protect them there". These refugees had come to number many thousands and included about six hundred and seventy-two Seminoles in camp near Neosho, about three hundred Chickasaws and Choctaws at the Sac and Fox reservation near Council Grove and over three thousand Creeks at the same place, besides a miscellaneous horde of Creeks, Cherokees, Shawnees, Senecas, and Quapaws along the southern border of the state. All these, as has been already intimated, entailed great expense upon the federal government and yet were in a deplorable condition all the time, there being no effective way by which their sufferings and privations could be permanently relieved.

After the battle of Pea Ridge, General Pike's Indians lingered for some time in Arkansas; but, when General T. C. Hindman assumed command of the troops that had formerly served under McCulloch, they were gradually drawn back into the Cherokee country. Then began what was eventually to be a serious trouble between Hindman and Pike, resulting in the resignation of the latter. The main point at issue was the employment of the Indians outside of the limits of the Indian Territory, Pike rightly contending that their treaties protected them against such service. The situation in Arkansas was, however, becoming serious and General Curtis, the victor at Pea Ridge, was steadily advancing southward. After much time wasted in useless argument, Hindman yielded to the obstinacy of Pike and met the emergency of the moment by directing "the enrollment and organization into companies and regiments of all men in Arkansas subject to conscription",<sup>20</sup> also by accepting such of the old Missouri State Guard as were available and desirous of

<sup>19</sup> *Official Records*, series I., VIII. 538.

<sup>20</sup> Hindman's report. *Ibid.*, XIII. 31.



continued service in the Confederate cause. By these means the danger was in a sense averted but the relations between Pike and Hindman became daily more and more strained.

In the latter part of June, 1862, alarming intelligence reached Hindman that Lane's expedition was moving from Fort Scott and that its advance guard had crossed the Cherokee line. To meet this force, five thousand strong, Hindman had only Stand Watie's regiment of Cherokee half-breeds, Drew's regiment of full-bloods, and a battalion of Missourians. This small band encountered the Kansas force at a place called Locust Grove, about thirty miles north of Tahlequah, and was defeated. More than that, virtually Colonel Drew's whole regiment deserted to the enemy. At about the same time the Pin Indians among the Cherokees rose in rebellion, committed some horrid excesses, and compelled Ross again to declare neutrality. It was reported that he was strung up several times before he would consent. This exhibition of obstinacy came to be regarded as a mere feint on his part, however, for he shortly afterwards went over entirely to the Federal lines and carried with him the Cherokee money and valuable papers.<sup>21</sup>

In the emergency just detailed, Hindman had again summoned Pike to his assistance, ordering him to move to or near Fort Gibson. Pike at first ignored the order and, when he did start to obey it, moved with such slowness, that Hindman in great irritation repeated it. Pike, irritated in his turn, resigned. His subsequent conduct indicated the source of dissatisfaction. On July 31 he issued a declaration to the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, in which he represented that their cause had been betrayed by the Confederacy, that they themselves had, in violation of their treaties, been taken out of their country and forced to serve beyond its boundaries yet without their due measure of credit, that they had been despised and criticized by the white troops, that they had been kept in Arkansas while their own country was being exposed to a merciless horde of jayhawkers, and that they were summoned or rather allowed to go to its defense only when the enemy's force had reached such proportions that their own unaided strength was inadequate to withstand it, yet no appreciable number of white troops had been sent to their assistance.<sup>22</sup> There was a measure of truth in all this, but publicity was the worst thing possible since it produced utter demoralization among the Indians and exposed the Confederate weakness to the Federal army. Realizing this, Colonel

<sup>21</sup> Hindman's report. *Official Records*, series I., XIII. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Declaration of July 31, 1862. *Ibid.*, XIII. 869-871.



Cooper, next in command, felt it incumbent upon him to put Pike under arrest. Henceforth Cooper, a man far more self-seeking than Albert Pike, figured as the leader of the rebel Indians.

The jayhawkers referred to in the foregoing paragraph were, of course, in large part, the members of Lane's expedition, which had come to include three Indian regiments, severally commanded by Furnas, Corwin, and Phillips. It might eventually have comprised five regiments had not the arrangements, begun late in this very year of 1862, proved abortive.<sup>23</sup> The advance guard of the expedition was led by Colonel William Weer, who had been ordered by General James G. Blunt, the general commanding, to concentrate his forces in the Cherokee country. Trouble soon arose between Weer and one of his subordinates, a certain Colonel Frederick Salomon, who was in immediate command of the white troops of the expedition. Apparently the white troops were disgusted at the mere thought of being associated with Indians, were out of all sympathy with the objects of the expedition, and in no mood to submit to the necessary hardships. Finally they mutinied, giving as specific reasons for their conduct, the personal character of Weer, his inactivity, and his foolhardiness in cutting off communication with his base of supplies. Salomon placed Weer under arrest<sup>24</sup> and with the white troops made a retrograde movement.

Meanwhile Colonel Furnas took charge of the Indian regiments and moved on to the Verdigris River. There the First Indian Regiment became uncontrollable and a large part of the Second deserted. Order was restored as soon as Prior Creek was reached, where good water and passably good forage were found. Colonel Furnas's duty was to hold the line of the Arkansas River; and, in August, Salomon was ordered to reinforce him. Throughout the remainder of the summer and the early autumn, various engagements occurred between Cooper's Confederate forces intrenched in the Creek country and Blunt's Federal forces, operating from the Arkansas River as a base. The latter were uniformly successful. As a consequence, the Indians became much discouraged and soon found cause for great dissatisfaction with Cooper. By November, 1862, they were reported as having deserted in large numbers. The independent command of Stand Watie met with more favorable conditions and joined itself to Quantrill's guerrillas. At about the same time dissatisfaction grew rife among the loyal Osages, they complaining, and with good cause, that they were ill supplied with arms and had received no pay.

<sup>23</sup> *Senate Reports*, no. 359, 41 Cong., 3 sess.

<sup>24</sup> *Official Records*, series I., XIII. 484.



In the late autumn of 1862, General Hindman projected a plan whereby the decision rendered by the battle of Pea Ridge might possibly be reversed and the Confederacy might again get possession of Missouri. The result was the battle of Prairie Grove, near Fayetteville, Arkansas, which took place December 4, 1862. At its close Hindman retreated into the fastnesses of the mountains and Missouri was for the second time saved to the Union. The failure of the South had a disastrous effect upon the Indian alliance. Colonel William A. Phillips of the Lane Expedition, or Indian Home Guard, was detailed to pursue Cooper and Stand Watie across the Arkansas River and, in doing so, he thoroughly routed them. After this the rebel Creeks under McIntosh prepared to lay down their arms and to return to their allegiance. The Choctaws were of much the same mind.

Furthermore, the resources of the Indian country having been depleted, it was found advisable by the Confederate authorities to resort to a general system of furloughs as touching those Indians that continued loyal to the Confederate fortunes. The Indians objected to this strenuously; for they realized that they had forfeited their annuities from the federal government and had lost their personal possessions. They were afraid to go home, and refused to leave the army. Under these circumstances General Steele, who took command at Fort Smith early in 1863, ordered Cooper southward. Stand Watie's contingent remained as part of the regular force which Steele was planning to use for the dislodgment of Lane's army from northwestern Arkansas and the Indian country. The defeat was but one more item to be added to the long list of Confederate failures in the West.

The federal government perceived the turn of affairs and seized the opportunity to come to an understanding with repentant Indians. Soon after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, Commissioner Dole, who was still in Kansas, negotiated a treaty with the Creeks which embodied its principles.<sup>26</sup> The action proved premature and the treaty was never sanctioned by the tribe at large. Moreover, it aroused Cooper and his Indian forces to new efforts, and they were ordered northward against Blunt. Between the middle of June and the latter part of August, occurred several engagements, such as those of Greenleaf Prairie, Elk Creek, Perryville, and Devil's Backbone, in all of which the Federals were victorious, so that Schofield, the general in command, could report in September that "All Arkansas and the Indian Country west of it are

<sup>26</sup> Indian Office Land Files, "Unratified Treaties".



virtually in our possession."<sup>26</sup> This was not precisely true, for Quantrill and Stand Watie were yet able to do some most effective guerrilla work, but the organized opposition of the South in that region had been completely broken and events rapidly terminated in the making of overtures of peace by the Indians.

As early as February, 1863, the Cherokees, in a special session of their National Council at Cowskin Prairie and in the absence of John Ross, who had gone east to consult with the Washington authorities, formally abrogated the treaty that they had made with the Confederacy. "They also passed an act depriving of office in the nation, and disqualifying all who continued disloyal to the Government of the United States; and also an act abolishing slavery."<sup>27</sup>

The action of the Cherokees was not immediately imitated by other tribes; but the ill success of the Confederates previously noted led speedily in that direction. In March, 1864, the Choctaws held a convention at New Hope and prepared to profit by President Lincoln's recent amnesty proclamation. They appointed a provisional governor, Thomas Edwards, and sent E. P. Perkins as a delegate to Washington. As soon as news of this reached Colonel Phillips at Fort Gibson, he forwarded a protest<sup>28</sup> declaring that the Choctaw Nation was still *de facto* rebel and begging that no terms be made with it until the Federal position were secure. He said, furthermore, that the federal government had now a good opportunity to reduce the great Indian domains to mere reserves and to open the surplus land to settlement. It was an opportunity, he argued, that the nation could not afford to lose.<sup>29</sup>

Perkins, in the meantime, went on to Washington and there endeavored<sup>30</sup> to shift all blame for the Choctaw defection upon the

<sup>26</sup> *Official Records*, series I., vol. XXII., part 1, p. 470.

<sup>27</sup> John Ross to Dole, dated Philadelphia, April 2, 1863. Indian Office General Files, "Cherokee, 1859-1865"; Moore, *Rebellion Record*, VI. 50.

<sup>28</sup> Indian Office Land Files, "Choctaw, 1846-1873", box 38.

<sup>29</sup> Indian Office General Files, "Choctaw, 1859-1866", P. 154.

<sup>30</sup> "I have the honor to present the following facts for the consideration of your Department. At the outbreak of this rebellion the Nation which I have the honor to represent misled by the council of Douglas H. Cooper then the Agent of the Nation and overawed by the Rebel troops surrounding us were swept into the vortex of the present rebellion. The same causes which forced the U. S. Government to withdraw its protection from our border forced us to take the position, which for the past three years we have occupied. Early in the present year a conference of the leading men of our Nation was called at Dookville, but from the proximity of the Rebel forces were unable to take any steps which might reassure the Government of our loyal intentions. Convinced that no convention of Union Citizens could be held in the Southern Dist. a number of us



shoulders of Cooper, where undoubtedly a very large share of it deserved to rest. The government had good evidence of this but wisely refused to take any action whatever until it could certainly be said that the Indians had returned to their allegiance. There was, however, practically no more fighting, in which the Indians in any organized way participated; and in September, 1865, representatives of the several nations met commissioners of the United States at Fort Smith and there concluded a provisional treaty of peace and amity.

The effect of the war upon the great tribes had been most disastrous. It was the opinion of Secretary Usher, a few years later, that nowhere could it possibly have been more desolating and demoralizing. The Indians lost ground financially, socially, and morally that it had taken them half a century to gain; and, for years and years, it was a sad picture of charred dwellings, broken fences, unstocked homesteads, and woe-begone people that presented itself to the white squatters who thronged into the Indian Territory during the Reconstruction Period. Many of these invaders were under the impression that the Indians had forfeited all their rights under treaties by their advocacy of secession, and they were themselves resolved to lose no time in profiting by the circumstance. The government, indeed, proved a little less exacting than its citizens had anticipated, yet it subjected the Indian Territory to reconstruction measures, different from but no less severe than those with which it afflicted the South. Thus, whether or not the Indians were to blame for their participation in a quarrel which in a sense did not concern them, they paid very dearly for their interference.

ANNIE HELOISE ABEL.

summoned a convention at Skullyville twenty miles from Fort Smith. The result of that convention I have the honor to submit herewith.

"I am fully convinced that our Nation are anxious to prove to the Government their loyalty by such a course of conduct as shall meet with your entire approbation.

"We desire to reestablish the form of Government formerly existing among us, which in its character is strictly representative.

"Trusting that Gov't as formed will be recognized by the United States and that the Nation may again be restored to its former happy relations with your Government, I have the honor to remain", etc.

Perkins to Dole, April, 1864. Indian Office General Files, "Choctaw, 1859-1866", P. 166.







